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Some Notes on (1) Sequence of Tenses and (2) Indirect Questions

[These notes were not written for publication, but they are furnished about as they were written in an exchange of views between two friends interested in Latin Syntax. The writer's version of his views was shaped more than twenty years ago: and his test of indirect questions was printed in 1888.]

Cic N D ii I 14 sqq: "*An, inquit, oblitus es, quid initio dixerim, facilius me, talibus praesertim de rebus, quid non sentirem, quam quid sentirem, posse dicere?*"

(1) *Oblitus es*: The perfect takes past sequence, however rendered in English, unless the *past performance* is ignored and the *present value* is emphasized as *essential and distinctive*: accordingly in such cases as this the participle becomes a mere adjective—"are you unmindful?"

(2) *Dixerim*, being past to *es*, must be expressed by pf subj, which idiomatically requires the regular past sequence (impf or plpf): hence *sentirem*, since *posse dicere* is pres in the time of *dixerim* past.

(3) *Quid dixerim* might equally well be *quod dixi*: the difference in value between the relative and the interrogative need not be finally significant after expressions of *statement or knowledge*: similarly *quid (non) sentirem* might be *quod (non) sentiebam*—(e g) so long as *dixi* means *rehearse* or *enumerate* (see f below).

(4) The distinction between relative and dependent interrogative is to be tested thus,—as to the *ambiguous word*:—

(a) If the leading verb is one of *question or doubt*, substitute for it *whether* and supply any provisional subject or object; as "I want to know what he said" = "I want to know *whether* he said *this, that, or the other*".

(b) If the leading verb is one of *answer* (including *statement* as possible *answer*) or *knowledge* (as *answer to doubt*), substitute *that* and supply provisional subject or object; as "I tell you what I think" = "I tell you *that* I think *this, that, or the other*".

(c) Otherwise the dependency is relative.

(d) As the indirect question is essentially a proposition and the relative-clause a term, the former would seem more suitable in such cases as the present (*quid (non) sentirem*); but, as a logical term may sum up a proposition ("Philosophers believe that God is good" = believe the goodness of God: so (*id*) *quod* has for its antecedent a proposition), this distinction cannot be pressed farther than the truth that Latin is decidedly fond of the indirect question,

where it is equally available—unless "the facts of the case" (Gildersleeve) are to be emphasized, so that *Dico quod sentio* = *sentio quod dico*, whereas *Dico quid sentiam* (I tell you that I think so and so) emphasizes the formality of the assertion, the importance lying in the *communication* and not the *views themselves*, except by possible inference (see g below).

(e) Verbs of inquiry may, of course, take cognate objects; and *quaero quod quaeris* may mean "I ask the same question you ask": hence Gildersleeve (467 2: 611 2) is but incidentally accurate in his analysis, which is there aided by *scies*, both *scies* and *quaeris*, however, being subject to shift of meaning noted next below.

(f) In the interchange of relative and interrogative clauses, note the shift of meaning in the leading verb, e g in *dixerim* controlling the sequence of *sentirem*: followed by the indirect question, *dixerim* means *rehearse* the propositions rejected: followed by the relative-clause, *dixerim* means *espouse*: so in "tell a falsehood", the verb means *espouse* or *father*. Similarly in *I know what you know*, the indirect question, "I know that you know so and so", is distinguished from "I know so and so and you know so and so", by the difference between (1) *realizing a judgment* and (2) *comprehending a subject or "knowing" a word*.

If *dixi* = *rehearse* or *enumerate*, we can say (1) *dixi quae sentirem* = "I rehearsed (the) various propositions that I did not believe", or (2) *dixi quae sentiebam* = "I enumerated (the) items I did not believe" = each other. To imply that "I told lies" or the like, *dixi* acquires the value of *espouse* or *support*, and as such, does not fall under consideration as a verb of possible answer: in other words, its object is not a *present affirmation* but the *content of a past affirmation* here assumed as a mere term = *non credita*: cf difference between *acc* and *infin* and *quod*-clause after verbs of *adding* etc.

(g) *Doceat quae agam* may imply dependencies as follows:

A Relative.

- (1) *ea quae ago* = attraction.
- (2) *ea quae agam* = ideal condition.
- (3) *ea quae agam* = final or characteristic.

B Interrogative.

- (4) *quae ago* = subjunctive indirect question.
- (5) *quae agam* = potential question.
- (6) *quae agam* = deliberative question.

The settlement of the dependency proceeds according to the test given above: even an expressed antecedent, which of course settles the given combination as technically relative, may be omitted, if the leading verb is of the kinds indicated. With indefinite antecedents, characteristic relative clauses are prone to a reciprocal interchange of value with deliberative subjunctive questions: this relation is due indirectly to the affinity of design and tendency for interrogation: e g purpose is possible result to be

tested by the main action, which enjoins the result, and may readily be conceived as enjoining it in response to appeal. But the relation is directly due to the fact that action taken in view of an adaptation implies a result that would naturally, or should specifically, be actualized: hence, when the leading verb permits the double interpretation of relative or interrogative dependency, the interrogation to be answered is either (1) "what should I (be likely to) do?" or (2) "what should I (with propriety) do?" In some instances, either will satisfy the requirements of sense (*cf* G 259 265), the potential stating the possible course readily evolving the complementary injunction to pursue it as the necessary course. But, as injunction is simpler than prophecy, especially in the case of others, the characteristic relative seems oftener to involve interchange with the deliberative, than with the potential, question. In G 621, it is not the indefinite antecedent *per se* that invites interchange of relative and interrogative values: this interchange is evoked by the verbs *elige*, *quae-sivit*, and by the characteristic clauses, each operating under the principles here discussed.

In *Cic Cat* I xii 30: *ea quae imminet non videant, ea quae vident dissimulent*, the dependent clauses are evidently relative, being respectively equal to *imminentia*, *visa*, and the leading verbs being regarded as *perceiving* and *disguising results*: these verbs, especially *dissimulent*, might as well have been viewed as *perceiving* and *concealing* the processes demonstrating those results, and as such, have been followed by dependent interrogatives.

The principles involved in this discussion can be much more elaborately illustrated, and I may return to them later, if they prove of interest.

CASKIE HARRISON

The Brooklyn Latin School

Our Financial Statement

The Editorial Committee begs leave to present the following report in fulfillment of the promise which was made in the prospectus contained in the first number of THE LEAFLET, that an itemized statement of the finances of the Scholarship Fund and of THE LEAFLET would be published twice a year "in order to show just what we are doing":

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